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When Everything Seems to be Falling Apart, Focus on the One Thing

Joseph Khabbaz

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13b–14)

When everything seems to be falling apart, focus on the one thing. On a frosty February evening, Diane Van Deren made history as the first woman to complete the Yukon Arctic Ultra.^[1] Touted as the world’s coldest and toughest race, The Yukon Arctic Ultra is a grueling 430-miler run in the dead of winter. For 10 days Diane ran across the frozen Canadian tundra. For the first 100 miles she drank no water and only slept about an hour each night. But that’s not the crazy part – Diane can’t read maps telling her where to turn. At 28-years-old she had a seizure in a car while being three weeks pregnant. As she remembers it, she felt a funny sensation that was brief. The next thing she remembered was waking up in a hospital confused wondering where she was. She was quickly sent to have an MRI where scans revealed she had epilepsy. Doctors decided they needed to remove part of her brain but in the process, they also removed her basic awareness of time. You would think that after all she had been through she would have given up, but as Franklin Roosevelt once said, “When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.” If we are going to look beyond our circumstances, we need to know how to maintain our focus. Just as Roosevelt learned - when we reach the end of our rope, tie a knot.

In the epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul was imprisoned yet he chose not to focus on his circumstances. He said, “Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.” Paul could have chosen to focus all his attention on his prison cell, but he chose to look beyond his circumstances and focus on God’s promise. How? By directing his thoughts to this one thing – Christ Jesus. That was Paul’s way of tying a knot at the end of a rope. Paul’s one purpose was knowing Christ and His calling, that’s what helped him move forward in the midst of trouble.

“The great purpose that constrained Paul to press forward in the face of hardship and difficulty should lead every Christian worker to consecrate himself wholly to God’s service. Worldly attractions will be presented to draw his attention from the Saviour, but he is to press on toward the goal, showing to the world, to angels, and to men that the hope of seeing the face of God is worth all the effort and sacrifice that the attainment of this hope demands.”^[2]

Reflection:

Is there something taking your attention from focusing on the one thing – Christ Jesus? What one thing do you want to apply from this passage in your life today?

NEWS & RESOURCES

- Follow **@ministryandmissions** on Instagram for updates on events and programs as well as encouraging messages and [check out our website](#) for many new resources.
- Dorm Week of Prayer at 8 PM in the Collegedale University Church.
- If you are be feeling anxious or have recently experienced loss or grief call 423.236.2782 to talk to a counselor on campus! (This is a free service for Southern students.)
- **Talk** with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to pray with or have a desire to grow spiritually.
- Join us for **Vespers this Friday night at 7:30 in the Collegedale University Church.**

^[1] <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/article/diane-van-daren-2009>

^[2] Ellen Gould White, *Conflict and Courage* (Review and Herald, 1970), 353.

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